DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 420 021 CG 028 514

AUTHOR Love, Cathleen; Larrick, Anita; Cobb, Brian
TITLE Career Exploration in the Middle School.
INSTITUTION Family and Consumer Sciences Education Association, Ellensburg, WA.
ISBN ISBN-0-911365-38-9
PUB DATE 1997-00-00
NOTE 66p.
PUB TYPE Guides - Classroom - Teacher (052)
EDRS PRICE EDRS Price MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS Career Development; *Career Exploration; *Elementary School Students; Intermediate Grades; Junior High Schools; *Middle Schools; Student Development
IDENTIFIERS School to Work Opportunities Act 1994

ABSTRACT

Success during middle school can translate to success in high school and the adult years. This monograph presents ways in which family and consumer sciences teachers can facilitate the learning of career development in the middle school. Middle level education is a unique challenge to educators because students at this level experience rapid and variable changes which impact how they learn. Therefore this program's design focuses on total growth and development, meeting the needs of the adolescent's intellectual development, as well as social, physical, and emotional areas. An introduction to career exploration for the middle school level is presented in chapter 1. Chapter 2 provides a brief review of the literature on concepts related to career development. Explored in chapter 2: choice on the world of work; analyzing personal characteristics; learners' needs; career development theories; family and consumer sciences programs; and career exploration. Each concept is discussed and an example of a lesson plan is provided; a guide to the lesson categories is provided as well. A listing of possible resources for career exploration is also presented. Chapter 3 provides a summary of the career development concepts covered. (MKA)

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Career Exploration in the Middle School

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Publication #261-08490 ISBN 0-911365-38-9
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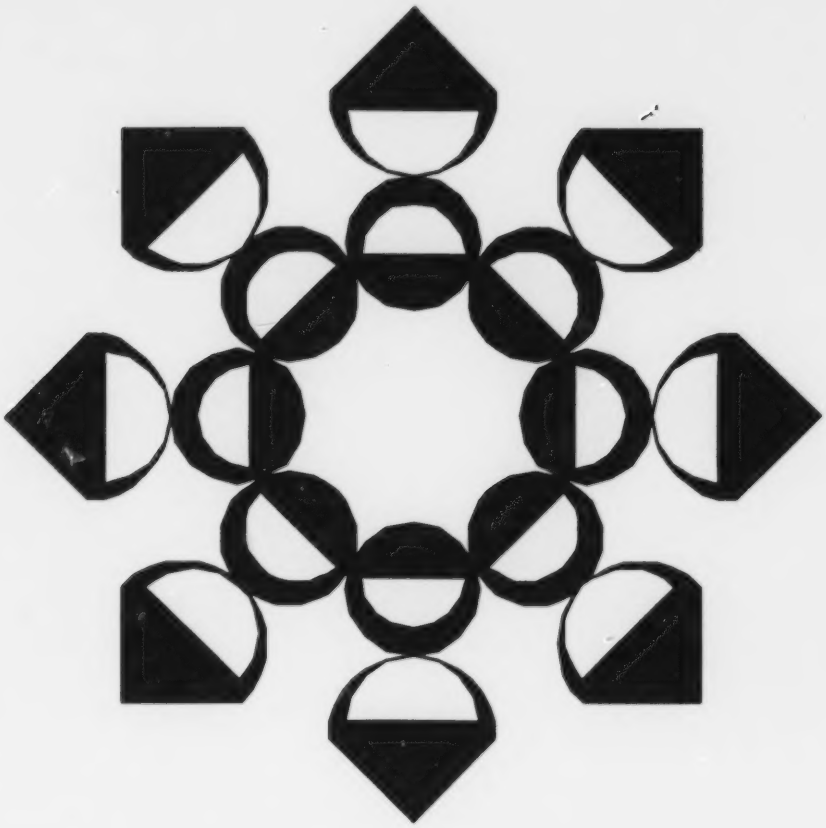

Career Exploration for the Middle School Level

Cathleen Love
Anita Larrick
Brian Cobb

Foreword

by Dr. Jan Bowers
1995-1997 National President

Family and consumer sciences education empowers individuals and families across the life span to manage the challenges of living and working in a diverse global society. Our unique focus is on families, work, and their interrelationships

Family and consumer sciences education supports and facilitates the development of the following National Occupational Information Coordinating Committee Career Competencies for middle school students

- Knowledge of the influence of a positive self-concept
- Knowledge of the benefits of educational achievement to career opportunities
- Understanding of the relationship between work and learning
- Skills to locate, understand, and use career information
- Skills to make decisions
- Knowledge of the interrelationships of life roles
- Knowledge of different occupations and changing male/female roles
- Understanding the process of career planning

As family and consumer sciences educators work towards our mission of improving the quality of individual and family life it is essential that we help middle school students think about and prepare for their future. Our program can offer students opportunities to link their education with their personal goals and interests. Cathleen Love, Anita Larrick, and Brian Cobb, have provided our professionals with an excellent resource for serving students. Their work can be used to facilitate the learning of career development in the middle school.

The Family and Consumer Sciences Education Association commends Cathleen Love, Anita Larrick, and Brian Cobb for the development of this monograph and their significant contribution to our profession. We also appreciate the leadership of Dr. Mary Ann Block, monograph editor and publications chair and the work of the publication committee.

CAREER EXPLORATION FOR THE MIDDLE SCHOOL LEVEL

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Sincere appreciation and thanks is expressed to the teachers in Colorado who have developed the *Career Awareness Starts Here* Curriculum (1995). Special thanks to Barbara Morey for directing the curriculum effort and to Pat Bohlender for supervising the effort.

To the Family and Consumer Sciences Education Publication Review Committee, we offer appreciation for your dedication to our profession for reviewing our work. We also thank you for your patience, especially those of Mary Ann Block, Chair of the Committee.

We also appreciate the skills and expertise of Joan Trussell in the College of Applied Human Sciences at Colorado State University for the word processing and reproduction of this manuscript.

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Career Exploration for the Middle School Level

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

"Middle level schools have the opportunity and potential to influence millions of young people to be successful (Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development, 1989)." Success during middle school can translate to success in high school and into their adult years. In the multiple roles that learners play, they will need skills and information about making choices. Family and consumer sciences teachers must be part of the team which assists in that effort.

When we examine what roles learners will assume as adults, there are four that are likely: family member, wage earner, citizen, and life-long learner. Many disciplines within the public schools contribute to the preparation for these roles. Often the critical inquiry focused on one role, leads to discussions about other roles. Too often important discussions about life roles are not identified in our curricula. Learners, particularly middle school learners, are anxious to have connections in the curricula to their lives.

The 1994 School-to-Work Opportunities Act is a legislative mandate to require schools to make connections to the world of work. It is designed with three components: work-based learning, school based learning, and connecting activities to link the two. Using these components, students are expected to better tie their academic education with their future as a wage earner.

The purpose of this monograph is to present ways in which family and consumer sciences teachers can facilitate the learning of career development in the middle school. Middle level education is a unique challenge to educators because of the nature of the student at this level. Middle level students are experiencing rapid and variable changes that impact how they learn in the classroom (Tippett, 1994). The design of the program must focus on total growth and development, meeting the needs of the adolescent's intellectual development, as well as social, physical, and emotional areas.

The School-to-Work Opportunity Act offers a chance to enhance our educational system with the understanding of the idea of connections. As Parnell (1996) states:

"What is the greatest sin committed in many schools today? It is the failure to help students use the magnificent power of the brain to make connections between:

- knowing and doing,
- academic and vocational education,
- school and other life experiences,
- knowledge and application of knowledge,
- one subject-matter discipline and another,
- subject-matter content and the context of use

And why is such a failure so critical? Because understanding the idea of connection is what students desperately require to survive and succeed in our high-speed, high-challenge, rapidly changing world (p. 18)."

Parnell (1996) goes on to say that good teaching is making connections between content and context of application because his studies of research on the brain has shown the need for developing connections. Teaching for connectedness is teaching in accordance with the way the brain operates.

Career development activities which are infused throughout the middle school curriculum will assist family and consumer sciences teachers in connecting learning with real-life experiences. To comply with the School-to-Work Opportunity Act, students must participate in career awareness or exploration programs no later than the seventh grade (National Coordinating Council for Vocational Student Organizations, 1994), develop career pathway goals by eighth grade (Morra, 1993) with a career major selected by eleventh grade (Hudelson, 1994). If these guidelines are implemented, career exploration could become a major area for middle level education.

This monograph will present concepts that can be explored with middle school learners in family and consumer sciences. Chapter Two of the monograph provides a brief review of the literature on concepts related to career development. Included in this chapter are choice on the world of work, analyzing personal characteristics, learners' needs, career development theories, family and consumer sciences programs, and career exploration. Each concept will be discussed and then an example of a lesson plan will be provided. The lesson plan format will be identical to the ones used in previous monographs developed by the Family and Consumer Sciences Education Association. A guide to the lesson categories is provided. The chapter ends with suggestions for possible resources for teaching career exploration at the middle school level.

Career exploration is an important developmental process for all learners. Chapter Three provides a summary of the career development concepts covered in the monograph. With the exploratory nature of the middle school concept, the middle level school offers an ideal environment for career exploration. It is our hope that this monograph provides ideas for ways to infuse career development into family and consumer sciences curricula.

GUIDE TO LESSON CATEGORIES

The lessons that follow are each formatted identically. For ease in locating the category in any lesson, each has its own symbol. Lesson categories are described below.

PERENNIAL PROBLEM

A Perennial Problem is one faced over and over by successive generations of families. Perennial Problems include enduring questions about how to improve the quality of families. Posing curriculum lessons as Perennial Problems avoids focusing on time-specific problems.

PRACTICAL PROBLEM

A Practical Problem identifies an action that can help address the Perennial Problem. This action is born of reasoned thought and sound judgment. Posing a Practical Problem in curriculum is a way of focusing on both affective and cognitive processes, on both knowledge and values, on life experiences, and on thought and action. The Practical Problem approach can be used to help analyze a teaching situation, identify and address an education dilemma, generate and critique alternatives, and make value judgments.

OBJECTIVES

An objective describes or defines what the learners have to do to demonstrate their attainment of the intent of the lesson.

DEBRIEFING

Debriefing Strategies are options for summarizing the lesson. Learners need the opportunity to discuss the content learned and the process in which they learned it.

EVALUATION OPTIONS

Evaluation Options for each lesson are based on the lesson's content, process, and application objectives. These options are meant to be adapted to meet the needs of the learners.

CHAPTER TWO

The literature reviewed in this section will explore a variety of topics that impact the issue of career exploration at the middle school level. Each section will be followed by a lesson plan to provide a sample of how this concept could be introduced to the middle school learner. The Lessons have been adopted from the Colorado Middle School Curriculum, Career Awareness Starts Here which was written by middle school teachers.

CHOICE IN THE WORLD OF WORK

The School-to-Work Opportunity Act is a legislative response to preparing people to enter the workforce. Jean Piaget's theory of cognitive development determined that adolescents are unique individuals who are struggling to adjust to the transition from childhood to adulthood (Piaget, 1967). These struggles are apparent in adolescents today. Helping adolescents to move from childhood to adulthood is the intent of the School-to-Work Opportunity Act and Family and Consumer Sciences teachers can be instrumental in assisting their students in thinking about the kind of adults that our adolescents want to become, not only in the workplace, but in all their adult roles.

This is an opportunity to change our education system to one that places an even greater emphasis on making connections to real life. In the report *Turning Points* (1989), prepared by the Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development, a variety of problems and hardships that young people face are identified. One of the difficulties adolescents face is making life impacting decisions that relate to life choices. Something as simple as deciding what classes to take, or what, if any, extra curricular activities to participate in could impact life decisions. This adolescent period, although characterized by developmental immaturity, is one in which many prevocational decisions could be made.

Many middle school students have little if any information on careers or vocational planning. Helping middle school learners with basic occupational direction would assist them as they plan their educational programs for high school and beyond. Learners have to have some understanding of their choices before they can choose what they would like their life work to be. The Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development (1989) addressed middle level education as a vital link in preparing literate and skilled citizens. The report pointed out that to prepare our young people for the next century, we must begin at the middle school level.

In an extensive *Review of the Literature* completed by Gloeckner, Cobb, Love, and Grant (1992) and funded by the United States Department of Education, Office of Vocational and Adult Education, ten categories of basic skills were identified. The categories are:

1) Learning to learn
2) Reading, Writing, and Mathematics
3) Communication

4) Adaptability
5) Personal Management
6) Group Effectiveness
7) Influence
8) Technology
9) Science
10) Home/Family Management and Relationships

These basic skills direct the attention of educators to what young people need to know to be considered literate and skilled. A detailed description of each basic skill is given later in this chapter. The School-to-Work Opportunity Act mandates that schools link education and working more firmly to ensure that young people are prepared for the future employment opportunities available to them (Hudelson, 1994).

The question of middle school career exploration becomes significant in light of the preceding reports and legislation. The movement of education reformers is toward applying combined academic and vocational education to actual preparation for the workforce. This preparation must begin during a student's secondary education. Students need to be aware of the skills necessary to achieve the employment and lifestyle goals they have for their future (Carnegie Council, 1989).

This brings the question of career exploration at the middle level to the forefront. Middle level education today maintains a curriculum of exploration that allows students to explore their talents and skills through a variety of subject areas (McFadden and Monroe, 1992). This type of exploratory curriculum helps students to continue to sharpen their academic skills while investigating a variety of interests.

Unfortunately, middle level schools are failing to provide significant career information that would allow students to learn about careers and future employment. Young people want and need more career planning information as they prepare to enter adulthood. Does a middle level student have the information necessary to identify a tentative career pathway and will that information assist the student in planning high school course work to allow for progress on a career pathway? These questions are pertinent to the mandates that link education and work as well as the implementation of career exploration at the middle level.

LESSON PLAN

PERENNIAL PROBLEM

What should be done about providing appropriate career exploration in middle schools?

PRACTICAL PROBLEM

What should be done to help students understand the impact of choices made during their secondary experience on their future career choices?

OBJECTIVES

The learner will:

Content: Evaluate how choices made now can impact future career decisions.

Process: Evaluate how exploration of ideas assists students in formulating concepts, interpreting data and applying principles when making career decisions.

Application: Identify how career exploration impacts personal decisions about careers.

TEACHING-LEARNING INTERACTION

The interaction with students for this lesson will be the Taba Inductive Thinking Strategy (Love, et al., 1994). This is a method to help students think logically and develop sequential thinking. The following teaching-learning interaction is an example of the use of this strategy.

INTRODUCTION

Have students keep track of all the decisions they made in a specified period of time that may be related to making a career choice. Discuss how frequently decisions are made. Identify areas where students find decision making the hardest. Identify areas where decisions are made by someone else.

PHASE 1: Below is a list of common career related decisions:

- Do I like to be creative?
- Do I like to help others?

- What classes do I enjoy?
- Do I enjoy supervising others?
- Does the way I dress matter?
- What do I like to do with my free time?
- What activities do I participate in?
- Do I like working indoors or outside?
- How important is my work environment?
- Do I like to work alone or with a team of people?
- Do I like to see progression in my accomplishments?
- Do I like to be told exactly what to do to complete a task?
- Do I enjoy learning?
- Do I like the careers that my parents or other family members or friends have chosen? What do I like about them?

PHASE 2: Ask the class to group the activities or tasks into categories. Possible questions:

1. Why did you place the activities or tasks into the groups you did?
2. What characteristics do each group have in common?
3. Do you have more decisions to add to the list?
4. Do you want to change any of the decisions from one group to another?

PHASE 3: Ask the class to formulate a label for each group that is characteristic of all the decisions in the group. (A discussion centered around choices in the world of work may be appropriate.) Examples: **Location, People-Oriented, Education-level.** Some groups may have more than one label.

PHASE 4 & 5: Identify points and explain terms. Possible questions:

1. Are there similarities between one or more groups?
2. What similarities do you see among the groups?
    - These choices are available only in certain careers.
    - These choices demand willingness to keep learning.
    - These choices require good interpersonal skills.
    - These choices may be negative for many people.
    - These choices may be positive for many people.

PHASE 6: Making inferences. Possible questions:

1. Thinking about what we have discussed, can you draw any conclusions?
2. What generalizations can you make? Generalizations might include:
    - Choices can be made now to enhance career options?
    - Career choices impact our lives both positively and negatively.

- When making career choices, teens can either become informed and enhance their choice or struggle through the decision with little experience and information.
- What does this all mean? (Teens can make more informed career choices if they are based on experience and information gathered throughout their secondary experience.)

PHASE 7: Predicting Consequences. Based on the generalizations the class has listed, follow up with a hypothetical question:

1. What would you do if you lacked the information and experience to get a job that you really wanted?
2. What would a current experience that you disliked tell you about your future career choice?
3. How can you examine your likes and dislikes through your current life experiences?

Have the class explain their individual reactions based on the generalizations they listed.

PHASE 8: Explaining and Supporting Predictions.

1. How do you plan to gain information and experience that will help with your career decision?
2. How can you find the resources available?
3. How can other individuals assist you when exploring careers?
4. Is choosing a career an area about which individuals need education? Why or why not?

PHASE 9: Verifying Predictions. Possible questions:

1. Would the class generalizations hold true in all cases?
2. What must be done to help teens realize the importance of gaining information about careers before making career choices?

DEBRIEFING

Content:

- How does the examination of information and experience impact career choices?
- How have your personal experiences impacted your thoughts about a career?

Process: How was this activity beneficial in examining the impact your experience and preparation will have on your future career choices?

EVALUATION OPTIONS

Break the students into small groups. Have each group focus on one aspect of their career (location, people-oriented, time-commitment, skills, etc.) and list: ways teens can make the most of preparing for this career aspect, and ways teens can waste time in making their career decisions.

Have students individually write about a recent experience that made them think about what they might do as a future career. Have them explain what made them make the connection between the present experience and the future career. Have them then write about an experience that made them think they would never choose this as a future career. Again, have them explain what made them make the connection between the negative experience and their future career. After they have written about both, have them summarize and come to some conclusions about the process they went through to make the two choices.

ANALYZING PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS

Personal characteristics of a middle school student enhance or hinder their learning process. In this section a brief examination is given for their physical changes, peer pressure, cognitive development, self esteem, and motivation.

Physical Change

Middle level students are adolescents in the midst of change. They are challenged by rapid growth, growth that is second only to that found during prenatal, infant and toddler development. The growth of bones and the skeleton is more rapid than muscle (Strahan and Van Hoose, 1994). This sudden change in their coordination often results in clumsiness and embarrassment for the adolescent. The adolescent becomes uncomfortable with their body and the awkwardness that comes with poor muscle control.

The adolescent can be described in other physical terms as well. This is a period of development when hormones are unbalanced. This hormonal imbalance creates mood swings that result from a loss of control or self discipline (Strahan and Van Hoose, 1994). One moment a student may be feeling positive and cheerful; the next grouchy and angry. Hormones also affect the energy levels of the adolescent. Although excessive hormones result in high energy levels (Smith, 1990), they may be followed by periods of lethargy as well. Here is a young person that may be full of energy and can't sit still and, within moments, have their head on a desk as if completely exhausted.

Appearance and acceptance by peers are very important factors in the middle school adolescent. Middle schoolers attach a great deal of significance to being like their friends/peers. When something about their appearance makes them feel different it becomes an important issue. Unfortunately, most adolescents also measure their appearance against a model on the latest teen magazine or favorite television program. Children during this period often compare themselves to an unreal standard and usually judge themselves to be very inadequate (Strahan and Van Hoose, 1994). When compared to these "stars" they fall far short in their own estimation, making minor imperfections into major flaws. These imperfections only further aggravate the adolescent's feelings of discomfort and embarrassment.

With so many physical changes occurring, their physical development factors become a major issue to the middle school adolescent. Whether consciously or not, the physical development of the middle school adolescent becomes their number one concern (Smith, 1990). Students quite literally cannot concentrate on learning. The result is that learning takes a back seat. Class activities and discussions are often lost on this distracted adolescent.

Peer Pressure

The middle level adolescent has a high level of dependence on their peers (Strahan and Van Hoose, 1994). They look to those close to them for approval, acceptance, and a reinforcement of their being. This need for peer approval directly affects the adolescent's emotional well being, many times adolescents yield their own feelings in order to belong (Strahan and Van Hoose, 1994). The need for acceptance is so great that adolescents are giving up a little part of themselves to have it.

Even so, middle school adolescents still yearn for acceptance from significant adults in their lives and need to have that positive interaction (Tippett, 1994). Adolescents need to feel that they are important to those adults within the family as well as those outside of the family. This many times includes teachers and other adults in a school system. Friendships with adults is a way to feel like part of the adult world (Smith, 1990). This affects their self esteem in a positive way and their emotional health as well.

Cognitive Development

The mental capabilities of the middle level adolescent are best understood in the context of Piaget and his theory of development. Jean Piaget (1967) has long been held as a premier authority in cognitive development. Piaget's research and subsequent theory has significance today as it pertains to adolescent development. According to Piaget's theory, people move through a number of cognitive developmental stages. A child of eleven or twelve years has been principally a concrete learner, concerned with reality and tangible objects. It is around the age of eleven or twelve that formal thinking processes are possible. Logical thoughts can be expressed without the necessity of evidence to support it. Formal thinking is more difficult and characterized as more mental work. However, Piaget labels this as a period of "thinking with wings" where childhood and adolescence become distinguishable.

Piaget's understanding of the adolescent is helpful in any examination of the middle level student. Students at the middle level would be in the process of moving beyond the concrete learning stage in which they would have to see the object or the process to understand it. They are now progressing to the developmental stage in which they can understand and predict the effects and results of actions without experiencing the action. With this new level of reflective thinking, middle level students could use information they receive to predict its affects.

Self Esteem

Frances Smith (1990) says that the development of a positive self esteem accounts for fifty percent of school achievement. This concept goes beyond ability or intelligence to simply thinking about yourself in a positive way. Throughout life an individual is trying to define who they are but never with such determination as during adolescence. School is an important part of the structure in a middle schooler's life, a place where they are trying to figure out who they are (Lounsbury, 1994). If students can feel positively about themselves, they will be better learners. Lounsbury further comments that students may not remember much of what is taught but will remember how they were treated. Students need to feel good about themselves to reach a level of achievement that is personally satisfying.

Motivation

Motivation to achieve at the middle level is linked to feelings of self worth. Anderman and Maehr (1994) relate dropping motivation levels to the decline in self esteem. Students who perform well in school feel good about who they are. A cycle is definitely in play. A student feels okay, is motivated to learn, and reaches some level of achievement. Conversely, when levels of self esteem drop, levels of motivation to perform drop also.

The "possible self" concept theorizes that school related failures during early adolescence affects future successes (Anderman and Maehr, 1994). These disappointments may lead middle level adolescents to narrowly define what they can do, both presently with school related goals as well as with life goals in their future.

Self esteem and motivation factors are closely linked and affect the learning that takes place with the middle level student. A student who does not have a positive image of self does not experience as many successes. These early failures lead to lack of confidence in what a student believes they can achieve. Students may inaccurately predict future successes by current failures. Thus motivation factors for immediate performance at school are lacking as well. With little motivation, students may not perform and thus experience fewer successes or achievements.

A lack of personal motivation may lead to a feeling that many students experience — boredom. Boredom is not limited to school time or its activities. Findings indicate that students experience high rates of boredom in other parts of their lives, including leisure time activities (Larson and Richards, 1991). However, boredom becomes a factor in a student's success at school. Many middle school students are bored with school and its homework because they do not see a relevance to what they are studying (Hootstein, 1994). Students fail to be interested in learning ideas, concepts or facts for which they do not see a need.

Summary

Thus educators are faced with a very real challenge when teaching middle level students. Educators must be able to channel the energy of a middle school student while dealing with the emotional roller coaster of this age student. Educators must help students learn to operate on a constant emotional level and avoid ups and downs through logical thinking. Middle school classrooms need to provide opportunities where all students experience a measure of success. With continued successes, students would then feel confident to stretch their personal limits and abilities. Learning will be relevant when students can connect what they are learning to what they need to experience success.

LESSON PLAN

PERENNIAL PROBLEM

What should be done about providing appropriate career education for middle school students?

PRACTICAL PROBLEM

What should be done to help students recognize the importance of understanding the developmental stages they are experiencing and how this impacts their self confidence?

OBJECTIVES

Content: Examine developmental ages and stages of middle school students.

Process: Evaluate how exploring information and experiences together impacts their Career Exploration for the Middle School Level — learning and understanding of developmental stages.

Application: Identify areas in their own life where they have had positive or negative life experiences with an adult and evaluate if this has impacted their self concept.

TEACHING-LEARNING INTERACTION

The interaction with students for this lesson will be the Cooperative Learning Strategy (Love, et al., 1994). This is a method used to increase achievement through group collaboration, enabling students to learn from each other, benefiting both high and low ability students, and improving human relations in the class. The following teaching learning interaction is an example of the use of this strategy.

INTRODUCTION

Divide the class in groups of four or five. Give each group the opportunity to choose a specific developmental stage to examine. Write the following group task on the board.

Day One

Research and examine the characteristics of the developmental stage chosen by the group.

Day Two

Prepare a 15 minute group presentation to be shared with the class. A paper must also be prepared and handed in for evaluation. This information may be presented in any manner they choose (i.e.: role-play, collage, illustrated talk, demonstration). They must include why it is important that they understand the developmental stages they are experiencing and the impact that that may have on self confidence.

This information could be used to develop a *Focus on You* project. The presentation would include what the project would be, what they would do, why they would do the project, and an anticipated outcome. The students could actually carry out the project and use it as a Star Event.

Day Three:

Class presentations and evaluation. Group and individual grades should be assigned to ensure that each student takes responsibility for learning as well as helping.

DEBRIEFING

Content:

- What implications does this information have for you?
- How will you use the information when making decisions about classes and other outside activities?

Process:

- How did working and learning in groups help you become aware of the impact that developmental stages have on you?
- How did you use the process to evaluate the knowledge you have gained and that impact that knowledge may have on your self confidence?

EVALUATION OPTIONS

- Have the students identify areas in their own life where they have been able to develop confidence and evaluate if this has impacted their self-concept?
- Have the students interview an adult that they admire. Have them ask the adult about their middle school years and how they felt about their self at that age?

LEARNERS' NEEDS

The Carnegie Report, Turning Points (1989), states that young people need the chance to be reflective, thoughtful, and ethical to be an effective human being with a lifetime of meaningful work. This preparation begins very early and continues throughout a person's years of formal education. Education at the middle level is a key element of a person's preparation for life and work.

Middle level schools and their programs have a number of functions that make them an effective vehicle for growth, development, and learning. Middle schools should be a general education institution that provides for exploration (Beane, 1994). It is through general education that adolescents gain a broad understanding of the world in which they live.

There are six basic functions for middle schools as described by Arth, Johnston, Lounsbury, and Toepfer in A Consumer's Guide to Mid Level Education (1995).

***EXPLORATION** — Students explore their own needs, talents, and skills and use this as a base for educational goals.

***INTEGRATION** — Schools provide learning opportunities that do not frustrate but provide growth, challenges, and success.

***GUIDANCE AND ADVISEMENT** — Students are allowed to make decisions about their current education and future vocation yet given help with choices and with resolving personal issues.

***DIFFERENTIATION** — Programs respond to the varying abilities of the middle school student and promote an understanding of what "normal" is both with its educators and its parents. Programs encourage students to reach their potential.

***SOCIALIZATION** — Programs provide opportunities for understanding the transition from adolescence to adulthood. Events allow for positive interaction with adults and other adolescents.

***ARTICULATION** — Planning for high school studies is based on what students have mastered at the middle school level.

If middle level schools comply with the program functions as stated by Arth, et al.(1995), are the learning needs of middle school students being met? Middle level schools have the opportunity to influence millions of adolescents during the years of critical development for young people (Carnegie Council, 1989). The potential is one of helping students nationwide to thrive.

Young people need closeness, a sense of autonomy and a sense that they make their own decisions. Middle school students also need flexibility (Carnegie Council, 1989). For middle schools to be more effective, educators must approach education as a whole rather than in small pieces. Middle schools must focus on the total growth and development of students (Arth, et al., 1995). Trying to meet the intellectual needs alone falls short of educating the adolescent. At a time when the adolescent is experiencing rapid and variable changes, educators must address all aspects of learning and growth in order for middle schools to be effective.

The total development philosophy corresponds with characteristics of a student well prepared through a middle level education system. Such characteristics are basic to what one considers being educated:

1. intellectually thoughtful and expressive
2. aware of career options and pathways
3. possesses the basic values of citizenship
4. able to develop and maintain relationships
5. physically and mentally fit (Carnegie Council, 1989).

For a student to complete middle school and possess these skills and attributes, the entire individual has been educated by the system.

LESSON PLAN

PERENNIAL PROBLEM

What should be done about providing appropriate career exploration in middle schools?

PRACTICAL PROBLEM

What should be done to help students to recognize the importance of identifying characteristics of successful people and utilize the knowledge in selecting a career?

OBJECTIVES

The learner will:

Content: Analyze the characteristics of a successful person.

Process: Evaluate how exploring information together develops idea formulating and problem solving skills.

Application: Understand how perceptions of individuals differ when identifying characteristics of a successful person.

TEACHING-LEARNING INTERACTION

The interaction with students for this lesson will be the Thelen's Group Investigation Strategy (Love et al., 1994). This is a method used to create a democratic group that defines and attacks problems of social significance. The following teaching-learning interaction is an example of the use of this strategy.

Ask the students to consider the following statements:

1. Why are some people successful in their careers and others are not?

2. Even though individuals realize the importance of choosing a career that they will enjoy, why do so many people dislike their work?

Ask the students how this information impacts them at this point in their lives.

Step One: Distribute the handout titled **Traits of a Good Employee.** Give the students a few minutes to read it. Ask for student responses to the information in the handout. Draw attention to the differences in responses — the stances taken, the feelings expressed.

Pose the following questions to elicit students' personal reactions to the handout:

1. **Opinion:**

   - What do you think about the characteristics presented in the handout regarding successful people?
   - Who decides what characteristics you have?
   - Would you be in favor of being evaluated for a job based on these characteristics?

2. **Relevance:**

   - What relevance do these characteristics have for you as a student?

Step Two: Pose the following questions to elicit students' perceptions of the characteristics addressed in the handout.

1. **Descriptive**:

   - What is the purpose of identifying characteristics of successful people?
   - Is it to find good employees?
   - Is it to prevent employee turnover?
   - Is it to ensure that employees will be successful?
   - Who benefits from the characteristics of successful people besides the successful people?
   - Is there evidence that schools promote any of these characteristics?

2. **Comparative**:

   Should there be tests to determine what characteristics people have or should people exhibit these characteristics through their behavior? Justify your response. Are people becoming more or less knowledgeable about what characteristics are esirable for workers?

3. Historical:

- How have these characteristics changed over time?
- How has education impacted these characteristics?
- How have jobs in our present society impacted these characteristics?

4. Causal

- What hidden messages do parents give children about career preparation and choices?
- What indirect messages does society give people about careers?

5. Predictive

- What would society be like if every worker had all these characteristics?
- What would society be like if all workers were successful?

Step 3: Divide the class into four groups. Give each group one of the following questions. Tell them their tasks are to: 1) list ways to find data which will answer the questions, and 2) create a plan for using these data to encourage people to examine the characteristics of good employees.

If people examine the characteristics of good employees when seeking a job, will they be more successful on the job? Will they be happier? What would happen if:

- some employees have these characteristics and others do not?
- employers required testing for these characteristics?
- only those with these characteristics were allowed to be hired?

Encourage students to suggest other questions they would like to explore related to the issue of characteristics of good employees. Assign groups to those questions.

DEBRIEFING

Content: What implications does this information have for you?

How will you use the information when making choices about your career?

Process: How did formulating ideas and solving problems as a group help you become aware of the impact of these characteristics?

How did you use the process to evaluate the characteristics and the impact that they could have on your future career success?

EVALUATION OPTIONS

- Have students interview a person who they believe is successful in a career. Have them describe the characteristics that make them successful. Check how many match the list used on the handout.

- Have students research issues surrounding the topic of characteristics of employees. Share additional information that the students discover.

TRAITS OF A GOOD EMPLOYEE

Below are listed 20 words that employers used to identify qualities they looked for when hiring and promoting employees.

Attitude: Feelings about something; employer's look for people with positive attitudes.
Courtesy: Good manners and concern for the comfort of others.
Dependability: Can be counted on to do what was asked or expected.
Desire to succeed: Wanting to be successful on the job.
Enthusiasm: Cheerfulness, excitement, happiness, optimism.
Friendliness: Being kind to and interested in others.
Health: Lack of illness.
Honesty: Genuine, sincere, truthful, being straight-forward, not taking company supplies.
Initiative: Seeing what needs to be done and taking the lead in doing it without being told.
Loyalty: To stand by someone; not speak poorly of; faithful to.
Morality: Personal code of ethics; "Do unto others ...," sense of right and wrong.
Neatness: Clean and organized.
Open-minded: Ability to see both sides of an issue; willing to learn.
Personal Appearance: How you look and dress; should be neat, clean, and fit the job.
Self Control: Being in control of emotions and actions.
Tact: Saying the right thing at the right time; withholding a comment that might hurt someone; considering how and when to say things.
Use of Voice: Should be related to the job; moderate tones; words clearly enunciated; medium speed; inflection; does not interrupt.

(Adopted from the **Career Awareness Starts Here,** a Colorado Middle School Curriculum, 1995).

CAREER DEVELOPMENT THEORIES

Super's (1957) definition of vocational guidance offers an appropriate basis for how career goals develop. According to Super, the schools must participate in the process of helping students to: 1) develop and accept an integrated and adequate picture of themselves and of their role in the world of work, 2) test this concept against reality, and 3) convert it into a reality, with satisfaction to themselves and benefit to society."

There are three prominent theorists who have developed their ideas of how this happens. Two theories relate choice of career with an individual's self concept. Another theory suggests that career choice is determined by matching the career with personality and environmental factors. Each theory has relevance when examining the process of making a career decision as it relates to middle school students.

Super (1957) states that choosing a career is a significant step for an adolescent. The choice of an occupation is a way of stating "I am this kind of person." The self concept emphasis of career development centers on discovering who the individual is and relating that to what the individual believes they can achieve in an occupation.

Super's theory is based on the premise that each individual is unique, with a specific combination of talents, interests, and characteristics that comprise a personality. This range of abilities gives one the potential to be qualified for a number of occupations with a high likelihood of success. If one can accurately identify these personal traits then vocational goals follow. Super believed that one's vocational choices were based on identifying traits about one's self and then using those as a basis for a career decision. He also held that if what one believed about himself, or life roles, could agree with a workplace role that job satisfaction would be very likely (Super, 1953).

Super's (1957) theory evolved to include the critical self identification period during adolescence as having significance to career decisions. Theories of development place adolescence as a period in which youth are struggling to find out about themselves. Part of this self discovery involves exploring options, testing limits, observing and learning from role models outside the home. Many adolescents begin working part time and learn from the adult world of work. With this information, adolescents begin to determine their own career preferences. They become involved in the process of making choices, which is the ultimate expression of the self concept (Super, 1957).

Gottfredson (1981) developed a theory of career development that also relates to self concept. Her theory identifies several elements of the self that affects how one narrows occupational choices. These factors relate to background, gender, intellect, abilities, and values as well as occupational interest. With each level of cognitive development, a young person further eliminates some occupational choices based on how they perceive themselves in light of those factors. As they become more familiar with their concept of self, occupational choices become more clearly defined and specific (Gottfredson, 1981).

Their discovery of self concept will lead to a narrowing of occupational choices of interest to them. Ultimately, a career decision is made that is compatible with their personal perceptions of who they are.

Both Super and Gottfredson recognized the importance of self concept when making occupational decisions. Having a clear picture of the individual self during adolescence will help young people make choices about a vocation that would be realistic and satisfying. According to Super, choosing an occupation is putting the self concept into practice (Super, 1957). Adolescents will choose an occupation that is consistent with the image they have of themselves. Thus, developing a healthy and accurate image of themselves as adolescents can lead to making vocational goals and the eventual implementation of those goals. As adolescents gain a clearer understanding of themselves, their vocational/career path also becomes more narrowly focused.

Another theory of career development was identified by J. L. Holland. Holland (1966) determined that vocational choice was an expression of the individual's personality. His theory identified six personality types into which most people can be categorized. He also determined that people live in environments that can be similarly categorized. Holland (1966) theorized that when personality and environment are put together, a prediction can be made as to the level of job satisfaction an individual would experience. Thus when personalities and environment match, levels of occupational success and satisfaction are higher. When they do not match, outcomes are dissatisfaction and low levels of achievement (Holland, 1966). Holland's theory was one in which individuals recognized their personal traits and desired environmental traits and were able to identify career areas that complemented both facets.

These career development theories are similar. Both Gottfredson's and Super's theories are based on the premise of individual development with career choices as a result of the development that occurs. However, Holland's theory takes career development a step further by relating personality to environment. With either theory the significant issue is the personal development that influences the vocational choice of the adolescent.

LESSON PLAN

PERENNIAL PROBLEM

What should be done about providing appropriate career exploration in middle schools?

PRACTICAL PROBLEM

What should we do to increase the self-awareness of our students?

OBJECTIVES

The learner will:

Content: Evaluate how increasing self awareness can impact our career decisions.

Process: Evaluate how exploring information about self impacts learning and understanding of self awareness.

Application: Evaluate the implications of self awareness on career decisions.

TEACHING-LEARNING INTERACTION

The interaction with students for this lesson will be the Suchman Inquiry Strategy (Love et al., 1994). This is a method used to help students improve their ability to relate data to the explanations they have formed. This model is appropriate in introducing and concluding units of study. Remember the teacher must pose a puzzling problem for inquiry. The following teaching-learning interaction is an example of the use of this strategy as a way to introduce a unit of study on creating self awareness.

Step One: Present the following situation to class:

Elaina and Shannon were two students in seventh grade. Both were good students, polite, and did their classwork willingly and promptly. They appeared to be alike in many ways. However, Elaina knew exactly what career clusters interested her and sought every opportunity to take courses and participate in activities that would help her be better prepared for these careers. Shannon was not interested in thinking about her future career and took things as they came with little planning or thought. Why when Elaina and Shannon were so similar in most respects, would they be so different in their career planning?

Step Two: Lead students through the data gathering and questioning process. Basic rules include:

1. Questions can only be answered with a yes or no response by the teacher.
2. Questions can be answered through the process of observation.
3. The student may ask as many questions as he/she wishes before yielding the floor.
4. Students should be encouraged to work together whenever possible.

Examples of questions might be:

Does Elaina have role models at home?
Does Shannon have any responsibilities at home?
Does Shannon have parents with careers?

Step Three: Closure

1. Students are responsible for reaching and explaining the closure.
2. Students need to analyze their pattern of inquiry. They should examine which questions were helpful and which were not, or the type of information they needed that they did not have.

DEBRIEFING

Content: What implications does this information have on self awareness and career decision making?

How will you use the information when making decisions pertaining to your career?

Process: How did the group dynamics that existed in the classroom throughout the inquiry process impact the outcome of the discussion?

How did you use the process to evaluate the knowledge you have gained and the impact that knowledge may have on positive peer relationships?

EVALUATION OPTIONS

Have students create a case study and have each student form hypotheses, data-gathering questions, and observations from the event and report in written form.

Using the handouts on self awareness, determine the characteristics they possess that would lead to informed career decision making.

INCREASE SELF-AWARENESS

What do you do well?

Different skills and talents are in all of us. A young boy who was handy with tools grew up to be a master carpenter. A young girl who enjoyed taking good care of animals became a veterinarian.

Some things I do well are:

_____
_____
_____

(If you have trouble coming up with ideas, ask a friend.)

What makes you proud?

When you've done something right, you have a feeling of being proud. You want to select a job that lets you feel that way *every day*. A young man who was proud of his writings grew up to work for a magazine.

Some things that make me proud are:

_____
_____
_____

What do you enjoy?

Do something you like because you'll be spending a lot of time on your job! At your age, you can find clues to direct you toward a job that will make you happy. We knew a girl who enjoyed drawing clothes. She became a successful clothing designer as an adult. Think about things you enjoy doing in your life. Write them down.

_____
_____
_____

What is most important to you?

Lots of things may be important to you. You will need to learn what things are very most important to you for you to find the best job for you. Think about it. If being indoors is more important to you, you sure wouldn't want a job where you would be outdoors all the time. If being with people is most important, you wouldn't be happy in an isolated setting. Write your personal very most important things. Think of your own examples. Remember, you are doing this for **you!**

_____
_____
_____

Explore Your Living Area

Clues could be right under your nose! A boy who always pinned sports posters on his wall became a coach. His sister, who filled her bookshelves with collector cards, became a sports announcer.

Look around your living area for clues. Which describes your living area?

___ organized and clean ___ a few things out of place ___ messy

List things you hang on your wall, put on your shelves, or keep in your drawers.

_____
_____
_____

Favorite Places

We all have comfortable and uncomfortable places to be. One boy liked old movies. Today he is into computer regeneration.

Where I like to be:	Where I don't like to be:
1. _____	1._____
2. _____	2._____
3. _____	3._____

Some of Your Other Favorites

What are your favorite books and magazines?

_____
_____
_____

List your favorite hobbies or games.

_____
_____
_____

What Have You Learned About You?

After completing this self-awareness inventory, how have these clues helped you learn about you? What did you learn about you?

_____
_____
_____

(Adopted from *Career Awareness Start Here*, Colorado Career Awareness Curriculum, 1995)

FAMILY AND CONSUMER SCIENCES PROGRAMS

Family and Consumer Sciences programs at the middle school are a beginning of the vocational education pathway for many students. Family and Consumer Sciences programs provide a number of avenues to assist students with their career decisions. Effective programs adhere to a similar mission ... to help early adolescent students learn to be responsible at home, within their families, and in their communities. By doing so the adolescent develops skills in problem solving, interpersonal relationships, management, and citizenship (Boggs & Kister, 1994). With such a mission, Family and Consumer Sciences programs are assisting students to prepare for the real world in which they live.

Family and Consumer Sciences programs offer a type of education to which middle school students respond. Family and Consumer Sciences gives middle school students the opportunity to solve real problems in all areas of their lives (Tippett, 1994). From how nutrition affects their physical development to personal decision making, Family and Consumer Sciences offers answers to their immediate concerns. Family and Consumer Sciences programs are usually exploratory courses with high interest over a short period of time (Dohner, 1994). This type of course falls perfectly within the short attention span and high energy of middle school learners.

Another benefit of Family and Consumer Sciences programs to middle school students is the opportunity for positive interactions with their peers as well as adults (Tippett, 1994). Middle school students want and need to have a personal relationship with an adult who will be a role model as well as a friend. Family and Consumer Sciences programs provide the opportunity for this type of interaction. Family and Consumer Sciences programs include activities that allow informal movement in the classroom while still being within some defined limits (Tippett, 1994). Middle school learners respond to environments which are sensitive to their needs at a critical period of their development.

Middle school Family and Consumer Sciences programs also provide an important function in career development. Such programs are unique in that they prepare students for work and for effective family membership (Felstehausen, Couch, and Wragg, 1993). Family and Consumer Sciences educators realize that in order for individuals to manage careers, they must be able to manage personal lives as well. Felstehausen, et al. (1993) address the issue of balancing work and family. Adolescents need to be taught the skills needed for living and working in a complex society. Family and Consumer Sciences programs are designed to make such a contribution to education.

LESSON PLAN

PERENNIAL PROBLEM

What should be done about providing appropriate career exploration in middle schools?

PRACTICAL PROBLEM

What should be done to help learners understand the impact of careers on a healthy balance in their lives?

OBJECTIVES

The learner will:

Content: Analyze the effects a career can have on a healthy balance in their lives.

Process: Evaluate how working cooperatively through inquiry promotes a reflection on values and the creative reconstruction of society.

Application: Understand how perceptions of individuals differ when considering a healthy balance in their lives.

TEACHING-LEARNING INTERACTION

The interaction with students for this lesson will be the Social Science Inquiry Strategy (Love, et al., 1994). This is a method concerned with developing students capacity to inquire into and reflect on the nature of social life, particularly the course of their own lives and the directions of their society. The following teaching-learning interaction is an example of this strategy.

Step One: The teacher initiates the inquiry by orienting the students to the dilemma of balancing work and family. The class has been studying career decisions.

The teacher works with the students to develop a statement of the problem which defines the elements and can be accepted by all as a starting point. The teacher and students brainstorm to develop hypotheses that serve as a guide to the inquiry.

Step Two: Students (in groups or as a class) define and clarify the hypothesis they choose to investigate. The teacher and students brainstorm to develop hypotheses that serve as a guide to the inquiry.

Step Three: Students gather data, facts, and evidence to support the hypothesis they have chosen to investigate.

Step Four: Students form a generalized expression or solution based on their investigation.

DEBRIEFING

Content: What implications does this information have on your choice of a career and a healthy balance in your lives?

How will you use the information when making decisions pertaining to your career choice?

Process: How did the reflection on values and participation with others impact the outcome of the discussion?

How did you use the process to evaluate the knowledge you have gained and the impact that knowledge may have on your views of career choices?

EVALUATION OPTIONS

In groups, have students research one of the following: balancing career and family, stress in the workplace, two career families, or family friendly workplaces. Have them discuss any bills that have been passed related to these issues. They should give an evaluation of the bill and its effectiveness. You may have them write to Congress about a particular career and family related bill.

Plan a project to assess the support systems in your community to assist working people to maintain a healthy balance in their lives.

CAREER EXPLORATION

Where does career exploration belong? How does one begin and when? These are questions about which many educators voice a concern.

Education at the middle level is exploratory by design, allowing students to gain information from a number of content areas. This type of design is complimentary to career exploration in that students explore their own talents and interests and then use their experiences as a basis for their high school education (McFadden, 1992). Exploring a number of content areas allows students to make some determinations as to the type of classes and education they want to pursue in high school. Students may be able to determine a preliminary career goal based on their exploratory experiences in middle school. Throughout the exploratory years of the middle grades, adolescents need to identify their own strengths and confine their career exploration to careers that fit them ("Exploring Family and Consumer Sciences Careers," 1991). By concentrating on strength related careers, middle level students have the opportunity to consider education and career decisions by the time they leave middle school.

There are components that will contribute to effective career exploration programs. The basic skills identified in Gloeckner, Cobb, Love, and Grant's (1994) review gives an idea of what stkills students need to enter the world of work. A summary of the review is included with the lesson that follows. Students need to identify, organize, plan and utilize resources, such as time, money, material and facilities, as well as human resources. Students should be able to work with others, especially as a member of a team, with negotiation and leadership skills. To be prepared for work, students must be able to find, interpret and use information as well as computer technology to process information. Students need to understand systems and their relationships within a larger system. Finally, students must be able to select, apply, and maintain a variety of technologies (U.S. Department of Labor, 1991) Anyone with this broad base of skills would be employable when they reach the workforce. Students need to see that a variety of skills, beyond "reading, writing and arithmetic" are necessary to be ready to work. With such skills students are prepared for work in a number of situations where job training can then be specific.

Career exploration should be at all levels, included in most subjects and not confined to simple career information. Career exploration is most effective if it involves a variety of instructional methods (McFadden and Monroe, 1992), and class activities and projects ("Exploring Family and Consumer Sciences Careers", 1991). A hands on approach with a diversity of instructional methods will appeal to the middle school learner.

These components will help ensure that students are learning about careers in ways that match their development on all levels — emotional, social and intellectual. By teaching career exploration with the needs of the middle school learner in mind, educators can help students look into their own future (McFadden and Monroe, 1992).

LESSON PLAN

PERENNIAL PROBLEM

What should be done about providing career exploration in middle schools?

PRACTICAL PROBLEM

What should be done to help learners understand the skills needed in the workplace?

OBJECTIVES

The learner will:

Content: Formulate a list of basic skills.

Process: Understand how to come to consensus.

Application: Evaluate how basic skills are applied in the workplace.

TEACHING-LEARNING INTERACTION

The interaction with students in this lesson will be the Consensus Strategy (Gloeckner and Love, 1994). The Consensus Strategy is a decision-making strategy in which the group aims to arrive at decisions acceptable to all, rather than imposing the will of the majority on the minority.

Step One: Identify individually what basic skills you will need to be successful in the workplace. For example, you will need to be able to read. What other basic skills do you need?

Step Two: Divide into small groups of two-six students. Show the transparency titled Consensus Strategy. Review the steps of the consensus on the transparency. Have small groups solve the problem presented on the transparency.

CONSENSUS STRATEGY

Problem: "What are the new basic skills?"

A. Brainstorm Possible Solutions

no evaluation
be creative
record all responses on newsprint

B. Evaluate the Solutions

review all ideas
come to consensus on what
constitutes the new basic skills

C. Make a Decision

write down agreed-upon decision

Step Three: Small group work.

Step Four: Have each group share one basic skill. Repeat this process until the groups have exhausted their lists or basic skills begin to be repeated.

Step Five: Show the transparency titled *The New Basic Skills*. Discuss differences and similarities between the class list and the transparency.

THE NEW BASIC SKILLS[1]

- Learning to Learn
- Reading, Writing, and Mathematics
- Communication
- Adaptability: *Creative and Critical Thinking, Problem Solving*
- Personal Management: *Self-Esteem, Goal Setting/Motivation, Personal/ Career Development*
- Group Effectiveness: *Interpersonal Skills, Negotiation, and Teamwork*
- Influence: *Organizational Effectiveness and Leadership*
- Technology
- Science
- Home/Family Management and Relationships

[1]Gloeckner, G., Cobb, B., Love, C., & Grant, B. (1991). Integrating basic skills into vocational teacher education curricula: Review of literataure. Fort Collins, CO: Colorado State University.

DEBRIEFING

Content:

Ask the following questions:

1. Where did your ideas come from?
2. How will you work to acquire these basic skills?
3. Do successful career people that you know have these basic skills?

Process:

1. Did your group have difficulty coming to a consensus?
2. What are the advantages to this approach? Any drawbacks?
3. Some decisions can be made by majority rules. Are there situations where consensus is important?

EVALUATION OPTIONS

Distribute the handout titled *New Basic Skills*. Read the handout. Discuss with an adult in the workforce which of these basic skills they use in their career.

Observe a class at your school. Write down the basic skills students are using in that class.

New Basic Skills[1]

The term "basic skills" has different meanings for different people (Dunn, 1988). It often has political currency (Miguel, 1985) with employers using the term loosely to mean a variety of work-readiness and work-related sets of skills. Basic skills are often defined as skills that were once referred to as the academic skills of reading, writing, and arithmetic (Dunn, 1988; Applying the Academics, Delaware State Department, 1989; Miguel, 1985; Owens, 1988; Strumpf, 1986; Pritz, 1988; Lee, 1988). In addition to the previously used academic definition, basic skills are also now cited as those social competencies such as the ability to balance a checkbook or read safety instructions (Dunn, 1988). Other uses of the term "basic skills" include the work attitudes found in successful workers, such as being dependable, responsible, coming to work on time, and being able to get along well with co-workers (Semple, 1987).

The literature reviewed is full of reports describing a whole new set of skills now considered to be basic. A major study by the United States Department of Labor and the American Society of Training and Development (Carnevale, Gainer, & Meltzer, 1988) documents the following as basic skills: (a) learning to learn; (b) reading, writing, and mathematics; (c) communication; (d) adaptability (creative and critical thinking and problem solving); (e) personal management (self-esteem, goal setting/motivation, and personal/career development); (f) group effectiveness (interpersonal skills, negotiation and teamwork); and (g) influence (organizational effectiveness and leadership).

Most literature on basic skills falls naturally into one or more of these categories.

However, other key documents indicate a need for additional categories. For example, a more recent study funded by the U.S. Department of Labor (SCANS, 1991) includes technology as one of five key areas of basic skill competence needed by individuals in America's workplace.

Science is yet another category that appears in the literature (Knold, 1986; Bishop, 1985). Documentation focuses on the need for all Americans to have a basic understanding of science. Thus, technology and science are added as the eighth and ninth categories.

Finally, the theory of the nature of knowledge suggests a need for specific emphasis on balancing family pressures with those of education and work (Way, 1991; Kline & Cowan, 1989). Although the nine previous categories all assist in success in home and family, the literature, particularly in these two disciplines, necessitates the addition of a tenth and final category, home/family management and relationships.

[1]Gloeckner, G., Cobb, B., Love, C., & Grant, B. (1992). *Integrating basic skills into vocational teacher education curricula: Review of literature.* Fort Collins, CO: Colorado State University. (Printed with permission from Colorado State University)

The categories of basic skills reviewed in the remaining pages of this article, then, are organized around the following ten categories: (a) learning to learn; (b) reading, writing, and mathematics; (c) communication; (d) adaptability (creative and critical thinking and problem solving); (e) personal management (self-esteem, goal setting/motivation, and personal/career development); (f) group effectiveness (interpersonal skills, negotiation, and teamwork); (g) influence (organizational effectiveness and leadership); (h) technology; (i) science; and 0) home/family management and relationships.

Learning to learn. Workers must be able to assimilate new information, adapt to new technologies and prepare to be occupationally mobile (Zuga & Lindstrom, 1989). As competition forces American industry into new patterns, workers will be required to shift from one job role to another and accept changing responsibilities. Workers will be required to absorb, process, and apply new information quickly and effectively (Carnevale et al., 1988; Champagne, 1986).

Increasingly, individuals must have a high level of integrated basic skills - skills which reinforce each other and can be applied to changing conditions. Students will need integrated basic skills at work and elsewhere to be successful in the future (Chisman, 1989).

The ability to learn new skills is becoming more and more important (Miguel, 1985). People will need new skills in the workplace every two to three years. Learning to acquire new skills gives the worker the ability to adapt (Blai, 1989) and solve problems (Crismore & Mikulecky, 1987). Workers need to consider education as a continuous process throughout a working lifetime (*Ten Recommendations for Improving Secondary Vocational Education*, 1985; Champagne, 1986). Learning to learn adds transition skills which provide the ability to move easily from one occupation to another (Patterson, 1985). Learning to learn is the most basic of all skills. It is the key to unlocking future success.

Individuals who have the skill to learn and apply new skills interactively can achieve competency in all other skills from basic reading to leadership (Carnevale et al., 1988; Champagne, 1986). Learning to learn proficiency appears to be acquired through experiences within the total educational curriculum (*Foodservice Subject Matter Update*, 1986-87). A program with learning to learn as a priority would include a liberal arts education of reading, literature, writing, mathematics, social studies, and science. The program would also emphasize the ability to start, continue, and complete tasks within a given time (Patterson, 1985).

Reading, writing, and mathematics. Although the skills required by the workplace of the future are more complex than in previous eras, the abilities to read, write, and compute are still essential. New requirements for reading, writing, and computation, however, go beyond simple functioning. The worker will have to have the capacity to perform in the increasingly complex atmosphere of the workplace (Buskirk, 1988).

Communication. Communication skills reflect how well individuals get along and how effectively they communicate with their peers (Semple, 1987). Communication involves both verbal and nonverbal forms of communication, written expression, comprehension, speaking, listening, conversation giving, receiving instructions, and attending to others in a positive way (Fitzgerald, 1986; Carnevale & Johnston, 1989; Carnevale & Gainer, 1989a; *Ten Recommendations*, 1985; Bailey & Novelle, 1989; Carnevale et al., 1988). Generally, people communicate by listening and speaking. People spend a great deal of their day in some form of communication. The average person spends "8.4 percent of their time writing, 13.3 percent reading, 23 percent speaking, and 55 percent listening" (Semple, 1987, p. 11). The ability to express oneself clearly to others and listening carefully and actively are important worker competencies (Patterson, 1985). Success on the job is linked to good communications; only job knowledge ranks higher as a factor in workplace success (Semple, 1987; Welter, 1989; Carnevale et al., 1988).

Although interaction is used frequently in communication, today's employees must also develop the ability to write. Writing relies on skill abilities in the areas of analysis, conceptualization, synthesis, and distilling of information. The shift in writing skills is one from long compositions to clear, concise articulation of points and proposals (Carnevale et al., 1988).

Adaptability (creative and critical thinning and problem solving). As workers become more autonomous within the workplace (Blai, 1989), adaptability becomes more necessary. Creative and critical thinking and problem solving provide a process for making well-considered decisions. Workers will need to have the ability to generate alternatives, project outcomes, assess probabilities, and take action and risks (Carnevale et al., 1988).

Problem solving and critical and creative thinking skills include the abilities to plan, analyze, synthesize, evaluate, organize, and manage information (Patterson, 1985), and to set priorities for determining alternatives (Fitzgerald, 1986). Problem solving requires knowledge and understanding of the processes needed to apply knowledge. These skills provide the worker with the ability to detect a problem, find or invent the solutions, choose the most appropriate solutions for the conditions, and track and evaluate results (Crismore & Mikulecky, 1987).

Personal management (self-esteem, goal setting/ motivation and personal/career development). Dramatic changes in the workplace have made personal management an essential skill (Welter, 1989; Carnevale & Gainer, 1989; Berryman, 1988). Workers with these skills have the tools for understanding and expanding their skills inventories, can manage change, and are more productive in their work (Carnevale & Johnston, 1989; Pucel, Devogel, & Persico, 1988).

As the workplace continues to change and as workers become more autonomous (Blai, 1989), the need for workers to have a well developed and positive sense of self-esteem becomes critical. Self-esteem allows workers to develop confidence in their ability to do the job and to adjust as conditions change around them.

Key components of self-esteem training include assisting employees to recognize their current skills; being aware of their impact on others; understanding their emotional set points and abilities to cope with stress, change, criticism, and so on; and dealing with their own limits by recognizing the need for and seeking new information to apply to problems and construct solutions. (Carnevale et al., 1988, p.13) Workers with personal management skills have the awareness of themselves as individuals with talents and abilities which are marketable. They recognize the need for adding to their skill inventory and can be proactive in dealing with the frustrations of the workplace. This skill becomes increasingly important with the increased complexity and changing demands of the workplace. Lack of these skills is often the root cause of other problems such as errors and absenteeism.

Group effectiveness (interpersonal skills, negotiation, and teamwork). Group effectiveness is the ability to work cooperatively with others (Buskirk, 1988; Carnevale & Johnston, 1989). The ability to interact with others effectively is critical when working in teams. It also is essential for service industry occupations which deal with customer complaints (Carnevale & Johnston, 1989).

As the industry increases the use of worker teams, skills in group effectiveness become increasingly important (*Executive Report of the Jobs for Indiana's Future*, 1989). This large category of competencies is composed of interpersonal skills, negotiation, and teamwork. Conflict is a natural condition resulting from individual differences in values and opinions. As workers are placed into more teaming situations, or as downsizing of middle management occurs, the resolution of conflict often falls to the individual worker. Today, workers must get along with others, deal with pressures to get the job done, follow rules and policies, and have a good work attitude (Fitzgerald, 1986). These skills include such activities as attending to others in a positive way (Fitzgerald, 1986), resolving conflict, managing stress, establishing networks with others (Patterson, 1985), and group interaction (Bailey & Novelle, 1989).

Group effectiveness skills are considered the cornerstones of successful teamwork (Carnevale et al., 1988). Due to the pooling of resources in most industries, workers are being asked to perform a multiplicity of tasks. To perform these tasks, workers must have an array of skills that individual or routine jobs do not require (Carnevale et al., 1988). Successful performance in work settings that require autonomous teams depends upon the worker's ability to interact, defuse conflict, and develop a sense of group purpose (Carnevale et al., 1988). Plihal (1989) referred to the ability to reach consensus as the "ideal speech situation" which is "characterized by freedom, equality, and openness" (p. 41).

Influence (organizational effectiveness and leadership). Influence refers to the impact of a member upon an organization. It is made up of organizational effectiveness (the ability to understand how the parts of that organization function together) and leadership (the ability to make one or many of those parts function smoothly). Workers need to have a sense of how their actions affect the ability of the organization to meet its goals (Carnevale & Johnston, 1989).

All organizations have a culture. The culture of the organization and the workers' ability to function within that culture becomes as important as specific job skills held by the worker (Carnevale et al., 1988). Armed with an understanding of what the organization values and how that is operationalized, workers will be able to become fully functioning, productive, and empowered members (Carnevale et al., 1988). Once a worker understands the organization's culture, then leadership skills can be used in positive and productive ways. To remain competitive, industry needs its employers to be able to operate within the organization and to assume responsibility and motivate others (Carnevale et al., 1988).

Technology. The Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS, 1991) lists technology as one of the five key competency areas needed for the year 2000. SCANS includes three competency areas related to technology: selecting technology, applying technology to a task, and maintaining and troubleshooting equipment. *Project 2061: Science for All Americans*, (AAAS, 1989) identifies technology as a key area of knowledge for this and upcoming generations. It is important that technology be an integral part of the future of education for competing in a global economic environment (National Research Council, 1989; AAAS, 1989; Durenfurth & Kozak, 1991; SCANS, 1991).

Science. It was surprising to discover that many of the frequently cited national reports excluded science as a discrete category of basic skills. This review has relied heavily upon the Carnevale et al. (1988) conception of basic skills. Indeed this source is often cited by others as an exemplary "basic skills document." Given the credibility of this work it was surprising to learn that the word science is not included in the index. Similarly, the SCANS (1991) report omits science as a competency area.

Reports that omit science as an overarching competency area often include many of the competencies traditionally associated with science, such categories as: critical thinking, problem solving, interpreting, and evaluating. In an interesting contrast, other national reports focus on science as the key missing component in the United States' reduced ability to compete in a global market (AAAS, 1989; Knold, 1986; Bishop, 1985). For these reasons, science is one of the key terms that this review uses to categorize what is meant by basic skills.

Home/Family Management and Relationships. Data from the past five years emphasize the interrelationship between success at home and success at the workplace (Way, 1991; Kline & Cowan, 1989). Family and work are intertwined in nearly every basic skill area previously identified. Personal management is directly related to family management (Goldsmith, 1989). Group effectiveness, influence, adaptability, communication skills, and the love of learning all begin in the home (Goldsmith, 1989). Similarly, interest in the content areas of technology, science, reading, writing, and mathematics begins in the home (Felstehausen & Schultz, 1991). For these reasons, and due to the fact that basic skills lead to success at home, in the workplace, and in education, this last category is included as part of the operational definition of basic skills.

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RESOURCES FOR TEACHING

There are a variety of strategies that have been used and are recommended by educators to be part of any career exploration curriculum. These include activities that will link community and business people to the career exploration within the classroom. *The Advisor* identified a (1991)number of activities to connect with community and business people. Class speakers could be obtained through student suggestions or through other sources. Local organizations such as the Rotary Club would be a valuable source of a wide variety of professional expertise.

Field trips, tours of local job sites and career information fairs or career day panel discussions provide a positive link to the community. Internships and shadowing activities allow students to work along side someone doing the actual job. Career interviews give students the opportunity to gain information about the work they are interested in from someone actually doing the job. Students can then learn that many factors affect job satisfaction of which money or pay is only one.

Classroom activities might include operation of a classroom or vocational organization business ("Exploring Family and Consumer Sciences Careers", 1991). Students get on the job experience in a variety of capacities as they work together to make their business a success. Students can also simulate an on-the-job experience through an activity like a fashion show or dinner theater ("Exploring Family and Consumer Sciences Careers", 1991). Students are actually doing the work that others do for similar events within the work world.

Role play situations have also been successful when exploring careers. Role playing for middle school students allows them the opportunity to act out the person they would like to be (Tippett, 1994). It is also a method for the teacher to find out what the student would like to do with their life.

Through FHA-HERO, students can participate in state and national programs to learn about working and business. "Working on working" is a FHA-HERO project that focuses on careers. Many other competitive events at the state and national level are related to career areas within Family and Consumer Sciences. Nonetheless, students are making decisions based on working that will carry over to other career areas.

Some educators plan their advisor-advisee programs to include career exploration activities. Community service projects get students involved in the community with the opportunity to assist or observe people at work in a variety of situations. Goal setting activities on a week to week basis help students connect personal responsibility with what they want to accomplish (George and Bushnell, 1993). Students that can relate goals to what they accomplish may be able to recognize their personal responsibility for reaching career goals.

An innovative teacher in Missouri developed a classroom activity that introduces the concept that personalities and environments are related to the type of career students chose. Based on John Holland's career development theory, characteristics, interests, and abilities were grouped and identified with a letter. Students selected a group that they felt described them or sounded interesting. Students within these groups then discussed related career areas and how personality types are attracted to different types of work (Cox, 1991). This type of classroom activity helps students become aware of themselves and how their likes and dislikes influence career choices.

Having students keep a journal is also a way to assist them in their career exploration. Entries which highlight what they liked and disliked about careers they investigate will assist them in their career choices. Journals can also help students make connections between lessons.

A group of Colorado Consumer and Family Studies teachers have recently completed a career exploration curriculum called *Career Awareness Starts Here* (1995). It is designed for implementation at the middle level. This curriculum covers a range of information and makes use of a variety of teaching/learning activities to assist middle school learners in making some career decisions. All of the activities are ones that teachers have used and feel are successful with middle school learners. Many activities are hands-on with high interest levels.

CHAPTER THREE

SUMMARY

Middle level schools have the unique task of creating an environment that meets the needs of the middle school adolescent. Research indicates that adolescents are struggling with many developmental issues, both physical and emotional, that affect the way that they learn. However, it is also apparent that intellectual development has proceeded to the point that middle school adolescents can make preliminary career decisions. Making career choices at the middle school level would enable students to plan their high school studies according to their career interests.

Theories developed by Super, Gottfredson, and Holland have discussed how individuals develop and choose a career. Super and Gottfredson base their theories on identifying the self concept. According to Super's (1957) theory, individuals who have a clear image and understanding of the person that they are can be then make vocational and occupational choices based on these identifying traits. When the chosen occupation matched the self concept, job satisfaction was high. Gottfredson's (1981) theory also relates to self concept but more as the elements that help narrow choices. Gottfredson's theory purports that a number of factors or elements within the self concept influence an individual to eliminate certain careers that would not match up with those factors. Thus, the self concept becomes more specific and career choices are narrowed to the few that would most closely match the perceived self concept.

Holland's (1973) theory of career development identifies six environment types and six personality types. His theory suggests that when environment and personality match, then career choices are made and job satisfaction is high.

The significant elements that connect these theories are those of the personality and self concept. Formulation of a career interest and thus a career goal hinges on the development of a self concept that is an accurate perception of the individual and their personality traits.

A number of factors can affect career decisions made by adolescents. Parents and family members are significant. Teachers and school personnel play an important role. Peer groups are an influencing factor. A major influence on career decisions is self esteem. The adolescent's self esteem will factor into their perceived success and ability to do the job they have identified. Many adolescents limit their choices due to a lack of confidence in their own abilities.

A number of education reformers have conducted a variety of studies with a career focus. Goals 2000 established objectives for the population that related to the education of the public. The SCANS report by the U.S. Department of Labor (1991) identified basic competencies that students should possess when entering the labor market. The School To Work Opportunities Act of 1994 legislated changes by connecting the educational institutions with business and industrial communities, making each responsible for the education and training of America's students.

Students need assistance in making the transition between education and work. Career exploration is a process that would assist middle school learners as they progress through their years of education. Effective career exploration programs would help students identify personal strengths and interests. Career goals could be established and a high school program designed to help students achieve their goals.

Career exploration activities are best when they provide for a variety of learning styles. Activities that meet the physical, emotional, social, and intellectual needs of the middle school learner are most effective.

Middle level students are capable of understanding career information and the effects of related decisions on a person's future. For example, given information on a specific career cluster, a middle school student could understand the difference in earning potential and subsequent lifestyles for an entry level job for a high school graduate when compared to an entry level job for a college graduate. This level of formal thinking is necessary for students to make satisfying decisions. Decisions relating to career choices have their roots in this process of formal thinking.

Developmental appropriateness of career exploration is a critical concern. Beane (1994) clearly states that early adolescents are not in a position to make decisions about what to do as adults. However, Piaget (1967) believed that adolescents have the developmental capability of abstract thinking processes. This would include examining career options and reflectively considering each option.

Career exploration is vital to the changing workplace. Various reports have designated a range of skills and competencies that students must present to future employers. The Carnegie Report, *Turning Points*, stated that the economy has little use for adolescents who are intellectually unprepared for the global economy (1989). Morra (1993), Huddelson (1994), and the National Coordinating Council for Vocational Organizations (1994) all identified middle schools as a vital link in the career exploration process. The recent School to Work Opportunities Act reinforces the need for exploration activities.

Will Rogers said, "Even if you are on the right track, you'll get run over if you just sit there." Including career exploration at the middle school level puts middle school students on the right track. The School to Work Opportunities Act will put America's schools on the

right track. It mandates that schools connect education with work based learning in a number of ways.

Family and Consumer Sciences programs play a vital role at the middle school level. As a vocational program, it applies academic learning while fostering personal growth (Boggs & Kester, 1994). Felstehausen, Couch and Wragg (1993) state that Family and Consumer Sciences classes make a unique contribution to education because of its emphasis on preparing for effective families as well as working. Family and Consumer Sciences programs have and will continue to meet the challenge of its dual role.

Franklin D. Roosevelt said, "We cannot always build the future for our youth, but we can build our youth for the future." Guiding learners through career exploration and awareness will assist in building our youth for the future.

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